

MEMORANDUM

To: School Superintendents and Principals

From: Cathy Danyluk, Director of Student Services
David Woodward, Director of School Building Security

Date: June 1, 2017

Re: Senate Enrolled Act 355 – Child Abuse Education and Policies (IC 5-2-10.1-12; IC 20-19-3-11; IC 20-26-5-35.5; IC 20-30-5-5.7);
Senate Enrolled Act 447 – Child Services (IC 20-28-3-4.5)

Background:

The Indiana General Assembly recently passed legislation regarding child abuse policies and instruction. SEA 355 requires the Department of Education to provide materials and guidelines, including a model for child abuse and child sexual abuse response policies and reporting procedures by July 1, 2018. It also expands the grade levels for child abuse and child sexual abuse education in schools from grades 2-5 (as previously required) to K-12.

SEA 447 requires school corporation, charter school, and accredited nonpublic school employees likely to have direct, ongoing contact with children to attend or participate in training on child abuse and neglect at least once every two years.

Guidance:**Child Abuse Prevention Policy:**

Per IC 20-26-5-35.5, a school corporation, charter school; or nonpublic school that employs one or more employees may not establish a policy that restricts or delays the duty of an employee or individual to report suspected child abuse or neglect as required under IC 31-33-5.

Research and Evidence-based Instruction on Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse:

Not later than December 15, 2018, and each December 15 thereafter, each public school, including a charter school and accredited nonpublic school shall provide age appropriate and research and evidence-based instruction on child abuse and child sexual abuse to students in kindergarten through grade 12. *Note that this expands the previous requirement (passed in 2012) from providing education in grades 2-5 to grades k-12.*

Instruction on child abuse and child sexual abuse may be delivered by a school safety specialist, school counselor, or any other person with training and expertise in the area of child abuse and child sexual abuse.

School Employee Training on Child Abuse and Neglect:

Each school corporation, charter school, and accredited nonpublic school shall require each school employee likely to have direct, ongoing contact with children within the scope of the employee's employment to attend or participate in training on child abuse and neglect, to include: the duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect under IC 31-33-5; and recognizing possible signs of child abuse or neglect, at least every two years.

The training format may include an in-person presentation; electronic or technology-based medium, including self-review modules available on an online system; an individual program of study of designated materials; or any other method approved by the governing body that is consistent with current professional development standards. The training may count toward the requirements for professional development required by the governing body and must be during the employee's contracted day or at a time chosen by the employee.

Resources:

Resources will be posted to: www.doe.in.gov/student-services/indiana's-child-abuse-response-policies-reporting-procedures

If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Culhan at aculhan@doe.in.gov, David Woodward at dwoodwar@doe.in.gov, or Jeff Wittman at jwittman@doe.in.gov.